

Big Bend

Ranger Programs

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River



August 23 – September 5, 2015

Monday, August 24

9:30 AM Program – “The Many Hats of a Ranger” The most recognizable part of the National Park Service Ranger’s uniform is the iconic “Flat Hat.” But this is not the only hat a Ranger wears! Join Ranger M. Lavender for a show-and-tell of the many different hats a Ranger wears and the exciting jobs they perform. Meet at the patio outside the Chisos Mountains Lodge. Wheelchair accessible. 45 minutes.

Tuesday, August 25 – Founder’s Day

5:00 PM Special Program – “Happy Birthday NPS!” Today is the 99th anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service. Join Ranger M. Lavender to learn more about the NPS, engage in social media, and celebrate with free birthday cake! Meet at the Chisos Mountains Lodge Patio. Wheelchair accessible. 30 minutes.

Thursday, August 27

9:30 AM Program – “Tree Army Who was Roosevelt’s Tree Army, and what brought them to the Chisos? Meet Ranger P. Alexander to learn more about these young men and their lasting legacy in Big Bend National Park. Meet at the Chisos Basin trailhead. 1/3 mile. 45 minutes.

Friday, August 28

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Life at the Windmill” The desert may seem to be an impossible place to live but a significant number of living things thrive in this extreme environment. Join Ranger B. Smith for an hour of discovery and exploration into the secret, and not so secret, stories of life at the windmill. Meet at Dugout Wells, six miles south of Panther Junction Visitor Center. Bring water and a hat. ¼ mile. 1 hour.

Saturday, August 29

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Getting to Know the Agaves” Big Bend is home to a variety of species in the Agave family. Found throughout the park, they have played a major role in the lives of both humans and animals. Join Ranger J. Jurado for a closer look at some of these unique plants. Meet at the Panther Junction Visitor Center. Easy walk on the Panther Path. 30 minutes.

Monday, August 31

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Desert Trivia” What defines a desert? Considered desolate, uninhabitable lands by some, deserts can be places of spectacular diversity and stark beauty. Join Ranger M. Lavender and learn about the deserts of the US, and what makes the Chihuahuan Desert of Big Bend so special. Meet at Dugout Wells, 6 miles southeast of Panther Junction. Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. ½ mile. 1 hour.

Wednesday, September 2

9:30 AM Guided Walk – “Meeting Mulciber” Who is Mulciber and what does he have to do with the Chisos Mountains? Join Ranger B. Smith to meet Mulciber and discover his part in the geology of these desert peaks. Meet at the Lost Mine Trailhead. Bring water, a hat, and good walking shoes. 1.5 miles. 1.5 hours.

Thursday, September 3

9:30 PM Evening Program -- “Star-gazing with Binoculars and the Naked Eye You don’t need a telescope to locate and enjoy many of the natural wonders in the night skies over Big Bend National Park. Join Volunteer R. Wonite for a laser-guided tour of the more prominent stars, star clusters, and nebulae in the current evening sky. Meet at the pullout near Mile 15.3 on the road to Rio Grande Village. Wheelchair accessible. Bring binoculars and/or a chair if you have them. Duration 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Friday, September 4

9:30 AM Program – “Tree Army” Who was Roosevelt’s Tree Army, and what brought them to the Chisos? Meet Ranger P. Alexander to learn more about these young men and their lasting legacy in Big Bend National Park. Meet at the Chisos Basin trailhead. 1/3 mile. 45 minutes.

Saturday, September 5

8:30 PM Evening Program – “Some Endangered Evening” Is it dark where you live? Can you see as many stars as you once could? A dark night sky is an important factor in the lives of living creatures planet-wide, a way for humans to connect to days past, when artificial light was non-existent. Join Ranger B. Smith for an evening about evenings. A telescope will be set up to view a celestial object. Meet at the Chisos Basin Amphitheater. Bring a flashlight. Wheelchair accessible. 1 hour.

Not able to attend a program? Consider these alternatives:

The 22-mile-long Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive offers access to eight different trails, several scenic vistas, many paved pullouts with exhibits that highlight park geology and cultural history, and culminates at the Castolon Historic District. Take a day and go explore!

Enjoy the breath-taking beauty of Big Bend National Park in cool air conditioned comfort with our 22-minute Park Orientation film. Available daily on request at the Panther Junction Visitor Center.

Consider a hike on Lost Mine Trail. The entire hike is 2.4 miles one-way with an elevation change of 1,100 feet, but walking the first mile to marker #10 leads to rewarding views.

Explore beyond the park and learn more about Big Bend history. The Terlingua Ghost Town offers several restaurants and stores, as well as a self-guiding tour of the old quicksilver mining district and historic cemetery.